

County Report July 2014 - Councillor John Reynolds

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Greater Cambridge City Deal

The deal document for the Greater Cambridge City Deal was signed in June. Work is continuing to devise proposals for the detail of the governance framework which is expected to be established by the end of 2014 following a further Member decision. More detailed work on options for investment of the funding is continuing to inform the decision to be taken, within the new governance framework, on the programme for the first five years of the deal period (2015-20).

Connecting Cambridgeshire - Free public Wi-Fi for Cambridge

A new free Wi-Fi network covering central Cambridge was launched by Connecting Cambridgeshire in June; this was the first step in making public access Wi-Fi more widely available to improve connectivity across the county. Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council and the University of Cambridge have worked together to set up the free Wi-Fi service, which builds upon existing University networks to bring lasting benefits for the city and beyond.

The year-long trial of the free Wi-Fi service provided via The Cloud will allow thousands of people to socialise, work or study on the move, and share their experiences of events such as the Tour de France. More than 20 new Wi-Fi access points have been innovatively installed on traditional lamp posts, CCTV poles and public buildings at key locations around the city centre. A coverage map and more information are available at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/wifi

Connecting Cambridgeshire is leading the introduction of public access Wi-Fi as part of the Government-funded Super Connected Cities project to improve superfast broadband connectivity, expand wireless technology and support businesses to use digital technology.

Volunteer voices shape gritting scheme

More than 25 parishes were ready for freezing weather as part of the County Council's Winter Volunteer Scheme, where members of the public grit agreed footways and footpaths which would not otherwise be gritted. Last year, these volunteers were invited to discuss the scheme at refresher training sessions and provided valuable feedback to each other and the County Council. As a result of their experiences and passion for helping their community, the scheme is being reinvigorated to create a more flexible approach that will reduce red tape and empower communities to make sure they have the local support they need, for example training their own volunteers to ensure they have a wide enough pool of people to help with the scheme.

Street Works license applications, process change

On Tuesday 8 July 2014 the process for applying for skip licences changes from the current paper based process to an online application process. This change is the first of number of changes to the way the County Council's Street Work's team process license applications. This change in approach follows on from a recent review of the County Council's Street Works function by the Transformation Team, which made a number of recommendations that seek to streamline the license application processes, and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

East Coast Main Line Level Crossing Closure Programme

Network Rail is embarking on a series of feasibility studies to explore options for the closure of level crossings on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) between London and Doncaster.

This is part of their commitment to deliver a safer, more efficient and reliable railway and will improve the connectivity within local communities by providing alternative means of crossing the railway. Consultants WSP have been appointed by Network Rail to lead on this work and as part of the programme will be carrying out a series of public consultation/information sessions along the route during the summer and autumn 2014.

There are ten level crossings within Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire which form part of the programme. Network Rail, in conjunction with the County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council, are currently undertaking feasibility studies of the options associated with closing each crossing. The aim is for work along the ECML route to be carried out under a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO), for which the County Council is a statutory consultee.

Barclays new service in Sawston Library

Following the closure of Barclays Sawston branch on 13 June, Barclays will be offering a 'Pop up Bank' with a member of staff who will be available to help with personal banking needs such as account enquiries, bill payments, transfers, registration for Online Banking, Mobile Banking and Barclays Pingit. This service will initially run as a pilot for six weeks to gauge interest from customers and will be available each Thursday starting from 19 June at Sawston Library, New Road, and Sawston from 10:00 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 15:00.

Read It Again! Winner announced

The winner of this year's "Read it Again!" Cambridgeshire Children's Picture Book Award is "Weasels" by Elys Dolan. Now in its 9th year, "Read it Again!" is an award for a debut picture book where the words and pictures are the work of one person. Over 10,000 children from 65 local schools took part in the event, reading, discussing and then voting for their favourite book from a shortlist of 8 titles, all first published in 2013..

Scams Awareness

The Supporting Businesses and Communities team (SBC) have contacted residents who may be being targeted by unscrupulous scammers. This focus is a result of intelligence gathered by the National Trading Standards Scams Team who, as part of a national crackdown, have been able to identify potential serial victims of mass marketing scams and shared the details with local authorities who in turn can provide help and support.

Working with officers from Adult Social Care and Cambridgeshire Police, SBC officers are offering advice and support to stop those affected from paying out any more money and prevent them from being targeted in the future. Every year more than 3 million people in the UK fall victim to scams, losing hundreds and often thousands of pounds. Anyone who thinks they may be a victim of a scam can get advice from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 04 05 06. Report scams or suspected scams to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

Real Deal – keeping local markets free of unsafe goods

Two more markets in Huntingdonshire have signed up to be part of the 'Real Deal'; a national markets' charter that sets out key principles for traders and demonstrates commitment to safe and fair trading at local markets. This sends a clear and welcome message to consumers that the market is a safe, trustworthy place to shop, whilst the message to traders will be 'if you trade in fake or unsafe goods you are not welcome here'.

The launch events took place at the markets on 16 June in St Ives and 18 June in Huntingdon. Officers from Cambridgeshire's Supporting Businesses and Communities service are continuing to work with more market organisers across the county who will be signing up to the Real Deal.

Creative People and Places - Market Place

The County Council is part of a local arts sector led consortium and was recently awarded nearly £1million worth of funding from the Arts Council for a Market Place project. Market Place will connect seven market towns across Forest Heath and Fenland through the development of a strong, confident and ambitious arts community.

The Creative People and Places Programme focuses on parts of the country where peoples' involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average, and takes a new approach by allowing communities and grass roots organisations to play a leading part in inspiring others to get involved with the arts.

The next 6 months will be spent working closely with communities and partners to develop a detailed programme of arts and cultural activity. Community groups, cultural leaders and artists will form a Market Place Traders groups in each town to develop ambitious cultural programmes.

World War Event 'The Last Day of Peace' – 3rd August, Hinchingsbrooke House

'The Last Day of Peace' free-entry event takes place at Hinchingsbrooke House, Huntingdon on Sunday 3 August between 1pm and 5 pm. This will bring to life the realities of the conflict on the home and frontline and will involve activities for all ages including re-enactors in costume bringing alive the spirit of the Great War. The Music Hall Society will perform music of the period and there will be 6 exhibitions including photographs, documents and letters from Cambridgeshire, Belgium and France. Refreshments, including cream teas made by Hinchingsbrooke House's chef and catering team will also be available.

The event is part of a cross channel project called 'Great War: between the lines' and is led locally by Cambridgeshire County Council, but it also involves partners in France and Belgium and other areas of the UK.

Northstowe – Phase 2

Pre-application discussions between the County Council, South Cambs District Councils and the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) are at an advanced stage. Next month the planning application for approximately 3,500 homes and a substantial part of the Northstowe Town Centre will be submitted. Following this submission a consultation on the planning application will commence.

Ely Southern Bypass

Further work has been undertaken to review the feasibility of the alternative solution of deepening and widening the existing underpass; the alternative scheme is supported by English Heritage and other objectors. In line with the initial assessment of this option, a leading contractor has confirmed that there are very significant risks associated with this option and has advised that he would not be prepared to tender for this scheme should it proceed. This has been further verified as a very high risk option by an independent expert witness from the Institution of Civil Engineers.

The Heritage Impact assessment in the Environmental Statement has been reviewed in the light of legal rulings and new planning guidance issued recently, along with the sustainability of a “do nothing” scenario. After due consideration, planning officers have decided that the further review work should be included as an amendment to the Environmental and Planning Statements in the application,

Eastern England Agri-tech Initiative

The County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership were together awarded £3.2m for this scheme last autumn from the government's Regional Growth Fund programme. The programme consists of 3 key elements; a £2m Small & Medium Sized Business Growth fund to support any Agri-tech business to grow and create jobs, a £0.54m Research and Development fund to support the development and commercialisation of new technologies and processes relating to agriculture and a £0.5m capital fund for the creation of an Innovation Centre.

The aim of the Innovation Centre will be to provide a focal point for cluster activity, bringing researchers and industry together, holding trials and tests for the application of new agri techniques and technologies, and offering opportunities for schools and young people to get involved in and learn about the sector. A competition has been held and the funding has been awarded to a project in Soham, led by NIAB.

Applications are now being processed for both the Small and Medium sized Employers (SME) Growth and Research (R&D) funds, with the first 4 grants, worth £250k, approved by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Project Board on 30 May. There are also a healthy number of pipeline projects coming forward, which underlines the strength of delivering jobs in this sector and the LEP identifying this as a priority within their Growth Strategy.

North Ely Developments

On 28 March 2014 East Cambridgeshire District Council resolved to approve outline planning permission, subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement, for 1,200 (Endurance Estates) and 800 (Church Commissioners) homes respectively on land either side of Lynn Road, North Ely. There will also be local centres, 2 new primary schools, on/off-site public transport and walking and cycling improvements. Viability issues have been raised by both applicants and these are being considered by the County and District Councils, requiring the prioritising of Section 106 contributions, and a Draft Heads of Terms was considered by ECDC Planning Committee in June 2014. The first residents are envisaged for 2016/17. The County Council is forward funding the Core and 1FE of the Endurance School which will open to existing children in 2015, with the balance (2FE) delivered by the developer by 2018.

Mobilising Local Energy Investment (MLEI)

Energy performance contracting for schools and buildings moved forward with Cambridgeshire County Council signing an Agreement with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to access the REFIT 2 Framework.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is also being signed with Local Partnerships to provide the knowledge and expertise to procure an energy supply company to work with schools and public buildings. Soft market testing is underway with suppliers on the REFIT II Framework, and the mini competition is due for release end of June 2014.

A pilot group of buildings including 4 village colleges, 3 primary schools and 2 office buildings will be taken forward to feasibility assessment during June/July 2014 for energy performance

contracting. These buildings will be progressed to investment grade proposals during August/September 2014 on the basis of a positive business case and for the Academy schools only, on the proviso that an agreement is reached with Government on the financial models for loaning finance to Academies.

The Solar Park Project at Soham is currently assessing the implications of delays to connect to the grid network and a recent government consultation on changing incentives for large scale solar parks. Originally this project was planned to connect to the grid in early 2015, however this date has now changed to 2017 due to a network upgrade planned at Burwell. Discussions are underway with UK Power Networks, the operators of the local electricity network to identify if there are opportunities to connect earlier.

Cambridgeshire Energy Switch - Reducing Fuel bills for Customers

The latest energy auction results are now in and although we didn't have quite as many people sign-up as we would have liked for this Cambridgeshire Energy Switch, we still saw a great auction. The results look really promising for the 306 Cambridgeshire residents that did register with savings of up to £180 being offered. The winners of the energy auction are:

- Dual fuel online & paper Monthly Direct Debit : **British Gas**
- Elec-only online & paper Monthly Direct Debit: **E.ON**
- Dual fuel & Elec Only Prepayment Meter: **Ovo**

The Ovo tariff is currently the market leading tariff in all energy regions based on average usage, as is the British Gas Dual Fuel Paper tariff. However both the British Gas and E.ON tariffs are bespoke and have been created for this auction only, which is great news as that is exactly what we want from collective switching!

Offer letters and emails will be on their way to households with no obligation to sign up. The next auction that we are hoping to participate in will be in October 2014, so spread the word to help drive down fuel bills.

Flood & Water

An announcement from DEFRA on 22 May 2014 confirmed that the Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB) implementation role for the County Council will be further delayed beyond October 2014.

In the absence of legislation and guidance from DEFRA, some large sites have already been experiencing issues with defining who will be adopting these SuDS features. Therefore in order to prevent ongoing delays or problems with the progress of development, interim measures should be developed. This is particularly crucial given that if appropriate maintenance of SuDS in new developments is not provided for then this will increase flood risk in the future at a local level.

To tackle these issues, a paper looking at the option of establishing itself as a SAB in advance of legislation, for strategic development (broadening to major developments once the SAB process is embedded and working efficiently), is due to be taken to the Economy and Environment Committee in October. We will be engaging with key partners over the coming months to develop the key functions.

2014 Cambridgeshire Cycle Challenge

The Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership (TfW) and the County Council have awarded the contract for the delivery of the 2014 Cambridgeshire Cycle Challenge to PleaseCycle for their bid in partnership with Cambridge-based Outspoken and CycleStreets. Employers and their staff in the Cambridgeshire Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) area will register to take part in the Cycle Challenge, with individuals logging cycling journeys in order to compete with one another and win prizes. The Challenge is designed to engage with existing cyclists and attract new cyclists, and is due to take place for three weeks in September 2014. This follows on from previous Cycle Challenges in 2010, 2011 and 2013.

Cambridge Park & Ride Parking Charge

The £1 daily parking charge is on programme to be introduced from the middle of July at each of the five Cambridge Park and Ride sites; Babraham Road, Madingley Road, Milton, Newmarket Road and Trumpington. The charge applies to any motorist who park at each of the five sites for between 1 and 18 hours. The first hour is free to allow people to drop off or pick up bus passengers or to collect purchases from the John Lewis distribution centre at Trumpington.

There will be no barriers and the ticket does not need to be displayed in the vehicle. The system uses cameras that have automatic number plate recognition on entrances and exits to check who has paid to park. This means that the system is convenient for customers to use and will minimise the time spent in paying to park at the Park and Ride sites.

Daily tickets can be purchased from ticket machines outside the main buildings on the sites. Discounted ticket deals can be purchased online or using mobile phones helping customers to buy tickets at a time convenient to them.

Parking for longer than 18 hours will be allowed but the following charges will apply

- Between 18 and 24 hours £10
- Between 24 and 48 hours £20
- Between 48 and 72 hours £30

Testing of the camera equipment took place in late June and the delivery of the ticket machines is due in the first week of July. The Park & Ride website has started to inform customers of the changes due and posters and press releases will continue this process over the next few weeks. The exact launch date will be announced as soon as the technical testing has been successfully completed.

Children and Families Act (2014): briefing paper

The Children and Families Bill received Royal Assent on 13 March. It will mean changes to the law to give greater protection to vulnerable children, better support for children whose parents are separating, a new system to help children with special educational needs and disabilities, and help for parents to balance work and family life. There are significant changes to the special educational needs and disability (SEND) procedures and these are being prepared for in Cambridgeshire. The new SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years will provide the statutory guidance on the new procedures and this is due out in the next few weeks; please contact Jane Ryder-Richardson for further details.

Public County Council meetings in July

Date	Time	Meeting	Venue
22 nd	10.30am	COUNCIL	Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP
24 th	9.30am	Pension Fund Board	Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP
29 th	2.00pm	Children and Young People Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP
30 th	2.00pm	Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel Town Hall	Bridge Street, Peterborough, PE1 1HF
30 th	2.00pm	Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee (provisional)	South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne CB23 6EA

All or part of these meetings are likely to be held in private on the grounds that they are considering exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed.

DATE	TIME	MEETING	VENUE
31 st	10.00am	Service Appeals Sub-Committee [information relating to any individual]	(provisional) Cambridge or March

Public County Council meetings in August (please note, dates are provisional)

Date	Time	Meeting	Venue
12 th	1.00 pm	Hearings Sub-Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP
19 th	10.00 am	Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge

20th	10.30 am	Joint Development Control Committee: Cambridge Fringes	The Guildhall, Cambridge CB2 3QJ
27th	2.00 pm	Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee (provisional)	South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne CB23 6EA

All or part of these meetings are likely to be held in private on the grounds that they are considering exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed.

DATE	TIME	MEETING	VENUE
12th	10.00 am	Service Appeals Sub-Committee [information relating to any individual] (provisional)	Cambridge or March

***To give your points of view on any of these issues, contact me by email at;
j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com***

As Your County Councillor I welcome hearing from you on these and/or any other issues that affect our community."

Yours John Reynolds

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